
Executive Summary

Public education is a vital interest of our state. It provides Californians with the capacity, knowledge, and skills to sustain our system of government, to foster a thriving economy, and to provide the foundation for a harmonious society. Today, students require education throughout their lives, and they bring increasingly diverse learning needs to each classroom. To be responsive to Californians' needs, our state must have a comprehensive, coherent, and flexible education system in which all sectors, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education, are aligned and coordinated into one integrated system.

This Master Plan for Education has two primary goals: to provide every family with the information, resources, services, and support it needs to give every child the best possible start in life and in school; and to provide every public school, college, and university with the resources and authority necessary to ensure that every student receives a rigorous, quality education that prepares him/her to become a self-initiating, self-sustaining learner for the rest of his/her life.

Because of the continual and rapid change that characterizes contemporary society, the primary need of every student is to become a capable learner who can readily learn whatever content becomes relevant to her/his life and work. It follows that the fundamental principle of this Master Plan is that an effective and accountable education system must focus first and foremost on the learner. Education policies, practices, structures, and financing must all be supportive of learners and their acquisition of the knowledge and skills that will enable them to be successful throughout their lifetimes.

This Master Plan addresses a number of major issues that have been impediments to the success of our education system: considerable educational disparities, especially for students living in poverty and for students of color; large enrollment growth; and fragmented governance and the attendant lack of accountability. A comprehensive, long-term approach to refocusing education in California is clearly needed, and this approach must have a clear focus on improved student achievement. This Master Plan should be used by the Legislature as a template to ensure that proposed education legislation in coming years is consistently directed toward reaching the goals contained in this Plan.

A Vision for California's Educational System

We are guided by this vision for education in our state: California will develop and maintain a coherent system of first-rate schools, colleges, and universities that prepares all students for learning, and for transition to and success in successive levels of education, the workplace, and society at large, and that is fully responsive to the changing needs of our state and our people.

We have sought to identify ways in which our educational institutions can become more coherent or 'seamless,' providing learners with school and college experiences free of educational and bureaucratic impediments. We have sought to ensure equity within California's education

system through recommendations for distributing the resources and opportunities necessary to provide a high-quality education to every student, irrespective of his or her circumstances. We have sought to make the critical evolution from *access* to *success*, by focusing greater attention on the academic achievement and career preparation of all students. Further, we have sought to create effective and comprehensive accountability for the entire education system by delineating authority and responsibility for all of its participants in a manner that ensures that each can be held accountable for ensuring that all students learn.

This Master Plan is comprehensive in scope, reflecting the size, complexity, and diversity of California and its people. It focuses on four critical areas of California's educational system – access, achievement, accountability, and affordability – as a means to describe how we can attain our vision. The report provides a factual context to open each section, followed by specific recommendations on the goals California should pursue over the next two decades. We provide in this Executive Summary a snapshot of how we envision the operation of this Plan in each thematic area.

Access

We envision an education system in which students are provided access to quality education opportunities throughout the state, and in which specific rights, obligations, and expectations for students and education providers will be clearly expressed, so that all participants in the educational process, including families, can understand them. These rights, obligations, and expectations would embrace what we consider to be the essential elements of the high-quality teaching and learning to which all students and education providers should have access. The Joint Committee proposes that these rights, obligations, and expectations be defined as follows:

Every student would be entitled to:

- Be taught by a competent, fully qualified teacher or faculty member;
- Receive a clear statement of the academic standards that define what s/he is expected to know and be able to do at every educational level;
- Receive an education, including intervention when necessary, that is sufficient to allow successful transition into the next levels of education and into the workforce;
- Receive supplementary educational services when needed to meet grade/class level expectations;
- Be provided access to high-quality learning materials and resources, including textbooks and technologies that foster and support the knowledge and skills s/he is expected to learn;
- Receive counseling and academic advising to assist in successful educational progress and planning;
- Advance to the next level of education upon demonstrating success in attaining stated academic standards;
- Attend school or college in a clean, modern, and safe environment that is conducive to learning;
- Be provided with sufficient information regarding educational, economic, social, and political options to be able to make informed choices for his or her future; and
- Receive adequate financial support for postsecondary education attendance.

Every student would be expected to:

- Attend school, college, or university regularly and participate in the educational opportunities that are provided;
- Commit to the level of effort needed to succeed; and
- Contribute to maintaining a safe, positive school, college, or university environment.

Every education provider would be expected to:

- Assess each student's knowledge and ability relative to the statement of expectations for the appropriate educational level;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and use of other institutional resources to promote student achievement, modifying practices when warranted to achieve improved outcomes; and
- Contribute to maintaining a safe, positive, and stimulating school, college, or university environment.

All parents would be expected to:

- Serve as children's first teachers by exposing them to activities that stimulate their innate disposition for learning;
- Work with school officials as partners to promote the development and achievement of their children; and
- Encourage and support their children in their efforts to succeed in their educational endeavors.

The State would be expected to:

- Provide adequate funding to ensure that the essential pre-conditions for quality teaching and learning would be provided at every public school; and
- Monitor the performance of education institutions to ensure that every public education institution develops a capacity to help all students meet or exceed specified achievement standards.

Within this context, students would attend school regularly, prepared to apply themselves to the lessons and assignments they were given by their teachers. When they didn't fully understand course content, they would ask for clarification rather than remaining silent. Teachers would continuously monitor student performance with an eye toward identifying those students who are having difficulty understanding material or who could progress more rapidly than the class as a whole. They would refer students to supplemental learning support or accelerated learning opportunities, as appropriate. Teachers would feel free and empowered to supplement traditional instructional materials and would improve instructional practices to facilitate student learning, including initiating programs to enlist parents as partners in the teaching-learning process. Within this rich teaching and learning environment, students, parents, and education professionals would all work toward ensuring that each student completed high school fully prepared to transition successfully to work or to further education at a postsecondary education institution.

Parents would know and understand what they could expect the school or college to provide to their children and would feel free to ask how they could support teaching and learning

objectives. They would offer their assistance confidently, knowing that school personnel would help them acquire any skills they needed to be most effective in assisting their children or would direct them to community resources from which appropriate assistance could be obtained. Parents would ensure that an appropriate study location were provided to their children and regular time set aside for them to complete any homework that might have been assigned by their teacher. Parents would feel welcome at school sites and would ensure that their children respected their schools by contributing to keeping them clean and safe. They would easily engage in ongoing dialogue with school counselors, advisors, health, and other school personnel to maintain mutual alertness to any conditions that might have an effect on the learning of their children and would collaborate on ways to address such conditions, when discovered.

State policymakers would identify these student rights as essential pre-conditions for every public school, college, or university and would endeavor to ensure that annual budget decisions reflected a priority for these items in the education budget. This vision reflects a historical commitment to supporting public education but also a firm understanding that a substantial increase in education investment will be required, and a belief that this additional investment will result in fewer Californians' not having the capacity to acquire gainful employment and/or eventually falling under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

Achievement

Student achievement is a central tenet of this Master Plan for Education. We envision an education system in which all students enrolled in public schools, colleges, or universities in this state will have educational experiences that provide them with a measurable set of knowledge and skills that equips them for success at every level of their educational journey. That journey would begin at birth with parents providing the nourishment, health care, and stimulating experiences that foster a disposition for learning in children. The State would broker federal, state, and local resources to ensure that those families needing assistance to help their children become ready learners would be able to find such assistance in their local communities, perhaps at their local school sites, where they could establish early relationships with education providers.

We envision California's schools, colleges, and universities staffed by qualified teachers, administrators, and other professional staff who would view themselves more as advanced learners than expert dispensers of knowledge and skills. They would clearly communicate the learning expectations they would have for the students who come to them, determine those students' respective strengths and weaknesses, create formal and/or informal teaching and learning plans to help those students meet their learning expectations, and would convey an enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Informed by a clear set of state standards for teaching, learning, and facilities, educational providers would collaborate with each other continuously to ensure that curriculum were aligned across grade levels and sectors and that a variety of assessments were developed to measure both teaching and learning outcomes. These assessments would be used strategically to determine how well students were mastering the course content, and students would be provided timely feedback on their progress. When appropriate, students who could benefit from it would be provided supplemental learning support, including accommodations for physical or cognitive disabilities, to help them meet

learning expectations, or would be provided opportunities for advanced learning. A shared objective of every public school would be to dramatically reduce the number of students who drop out of school prior to earning a high school diploma.

Teachers and faculty also would reflect on the impact of their efforts to instill a disposition for learning in all the students with whom they work – a critical factor in retaining students – and on mastery by their students of the academic content and skills they teach. They would share their successes and failures with colleagues in an effort to learn of more effective, or at least more promising, strategies that could be tried to achieve more positive outcomes among the students with whom they have been least effective. They would participate in customized professional development activities, to help them learn new skills to improve their effectiveness with diverse students, remain current in the range of career and technical applications of the knowledge and skills they teach, and/or develop comfort with the effective use of technology to better achieve their instructional objectives.

School and campus administrators would continuously monitor the condition and maintenance of facilities to ensure that they provide a positive teaching and learning environment. They would communicate regularly with teachers/faculty to determine their needs and would strive to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to continue being effective with every student. They would regularly review data on student achievement to identify teaching and learning trends that might warrant more attention, and institutional performance data to determine if resources were being used most effectively and efficiently. They would actively engage with representatives of community groups and agencies both to attract fiscal and political support for their institutions and to build broader ‘learning communities’ that reinforce the learning objectives of the institutions when students return to their homes and neighborhoods. This support would be channeled into supplemental service-learning opportunities that teachers could use to build a sense of civic and community involvement and to reinforce learning objectives.

Required state testing would serve two purposes. First, it would provide an aggregate picture to state agencies as one indicator of how well public education institutions were performing in meeting California’s standards for teaching and learning with the resources made available to them. Testing data would be balanced by an institutional profile of the teaching and learning opportunities within which educational providers work and students learn and would also be aligned with the academic content standards that guide what is taught in every public school. Second, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) would be used in conjunction with California’s standards-based test to permit California to compare the achievement of its students with that of students in other states.

We envision California’s postsecondary education institutions’ developing an assessment instrument that would provide an indicator of how well public colleges and universities were doing in helping postsecondary education students master the common body of knowledge represented by the general education requirements that all undergraduate students are expected to complete. As part of their regular program review process, faculty within public colleges and universities would begin to develop standards for knowledge and skills that students majoring in specific academic disciplines would be expected to master, and would routinely assess achievement of these expectations. Our public colleges and universities would continuously

review data on student achievement in an effort to identify the types of learning and social support that might result in greater success and persistence through certificate, credential, or degree completion by each enrolled student. Academic strengths and weaknesses of students revealed through this data analysis would be used to focus continuous faculty dialogue with high school teachers and, in the case of our two public university systems, with their community college counterparts.

Public colleges and universities would revise their reward structures to recognize faculty who were particularly effective in promoting student achievement and would actively encourage them to serve as mentors to newly hired faculty. Differentiation of function among faculty would be an accepted practice within public colleges and universities. Faculty who were particularly effective researchers would collaborate with colleagues who were particularly effective teachers, in a continuous effort to infuse new knowledge into the curriculum to which students would be exposed. Faculty who were particularly good at developing learning modules and course curriculum would routinely collaborate with technologists to develop effective ways to promote learning for every student, whether the student is physically present in a classroom or participating in learning activities at a different place and time. Faculty would blend their collective strengths and skills to provide professional development activities for all faculty that would enable each of them to improve their abilities to be effective teachers.

In short, we envision California's education system's becoming one of more- and less-advanced learners, with more-advanced learners (our current teaching, administrative, and professional personnel) engaged in continuous reflection on the teaching-learning process, in an effort to improve educational outcomes for all learners. Parents would be deliberately engaged as primarily responsible for preparing their children to become ready learners prior to the age of compulsory school attendance. State control agencies would review data on institutional and student performance to identify areas of need for improved learning opportunities for all children, particularly in schools serving communities with high concentrations of low-income families, and would seek to broker resources to ensure that needed services were provided and used effectively.

Accountability

We envision an education system in which student achievement will not be left to chance or 'innate' intelligence, which will not tolerate sorting of students into tracks in which less is expected of some students than others, and which will categorically reject the notion that student achievement must be distributed along a bell curve. California would build and sustain an education system that would hold itself collectively accountable for the achievement of all students at or above a common standard; collect and analyze data regularly to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its education providers; direct resources to build capacity in schools, colleges, and universities performing below desired levels; encourage replication of effective practices; and allow flexibility in the approaches taken by education institutions to achieve desired outcomes.

Our accountability system would have clear statements of a limited set of goals for each level of education provided in the state. We would begin a process of expanding access to preschool for

all families who desire to take advantage of it and would make full day kindergarten a requirement for all children of compulsory attendance age. We would phase in these educational services both to better manage the cost of implementation and to ensure particular attention to the improvement of the educational opportunities for students residing in neighborhoods served by our lowest performing schools before extension of those benefits to families served by higher performing schools. We would regularly review data on the achievement of students who participate in preschool and extended day kindergarten to determine how their achievement compared with that of their peers who did not participate in these services. We would also review data on the qualifications and experiences of the teachers of these students and note where additional school capacity might be required. We would require that all students enrolling in kindergarten undergo developmental screening, or have parents provide evidence that such screening had already been conducted, to ensure that any disabilities that might impede learning were identified early and appropriate interventions prescribed.

We would adhere to our academic content standards, establish desired proficiency levels for each area, strengthen our teacher preparation programs to ensure all new teachers have the content knowledge and skills to teach to those standards, complete development of criterion-referenced assessment instruments to measure student achievement, and routinely mail school report cards to parents of enrolled students. These report cards would contain information on student achievement, and average school, district, and state achievement results. We would expand the School Accountability Report Card and include in it indicators of the ‘opportunities for teaching and learning’ that are provided in the schools, and thereby assist parents in understanding both the achievement of their children relative to the opportunities provided to them, and the opportunities their children receive in comparison to the opportunities indicators that derive from the California Quality Education Model. We would direct local districts to carefully monitor student achievement data and expenditures at each school under their jurisdiction but would require annual submission of only a limited set of data on student characteristics and achievement, personnel characteristics, and status of compliance with state standards. We would identify a clear set of progressive interventions to be implemented based on evaluation of institutional performance. For low-performing schools, emphasis would be given to assessing the balance between institutional capacity and motivation. Early interventions would be aimed at increasing institutional capacity, while more severe interventions would involve dissolution of district or school leadership and appointment of new supervisory teams drawn from local constituencies and monitored by regional offices of education on behalf of the State. For high-performing schools, early interventions would focus on public recognition of schools and/or districts and listing of them as a referral for technical assistance in replicating effective practices. Continuous high performance would be rewarded with supplemental appropriations to districts/schools to enhance professional development, capacity to provide technical assistance to other schools, and improvement of teaching and learning conditions.

We envision making substantial progress in our efforts to measure student achievement in a common body of knowledge taught by all postsecondary education institutions, allowing for locally defined measures unique to our California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California systems. Each of our public postsecondary education systems would agree to use a modified high school exit examination as a basis for determining readiness of high school students to enroll in collegiate courses within their sector. The exam

would be administered in the 11th grade year, and each system would determine an achievement score appropriate to expectations of student readiness. High school students interested in attending the California State University or the University of California, but not achieving high enough scores on the exit exam, would focus their efforts in the 12th grade on achieving the necessary levels of proficiency, and eliminating any need for remedial instruction upon college enrollment. Both the California State University and the University of California systems would provide assistance to high schools by training successful undergraduate and graduate students to provide learning support to high school students and/or encouraging them to engage in service learning activities as part of their curricular requirements. Local community colleges would provide opportunities for high school seniors to enroll concurrently to further strengthen their readiness for college or university enrollment and to accelerate their progress toward earning collegiate certificates or degrees. All three public sectors of postsecondary education would routinely provide feedback to high school principals, and to English or math department chairs as appropriate, data on the academic performance of their graduates in English and math courses completed at their respective system campuses.

We would establish a transfer associate degree program that would smooth the transition of community college students to the California State University and the University of California systems, or to California's independent colleges and universities with minimal or no loss of time or credits. The academic senates of the individual system would collaborate to revise and enhance the charge of their voluntary Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates to take the lead in efforts to align courses among the systems and class levels and to promote efficient updates when course content were revised to reflect new knowledge generated through the research of their peers. Faculty within the University of California and the California State University systems would strengthen their collaboration with each other to articulate graduate programs at the masters and doctorate levels as a means of recruiting students from underrepresented groups into, and expediting their completion of, advanced degree programs. While limiting their initial efforts to masters and doctoral programs within the same discipline, faculty would be prompted by the potential benefits to students to next turn their attention to opportunities for articulating graduate programs across disciplines.

We would clearly communicate the state expectation that adult education programs are intended to equip adults with skills and knowledge to be self-sufficient. A set of indicators would be in place permitting regular evaluation of the effectiveness of adult education programs. We would ensure that adequate funding would be provided to support provision of basic educational skills, English literacy and proficiency, vocational preparation, and civics in every adult education program. Adult education providers would also collaborate with the State's Labor and Workforce Development Agency, which would be assigned primary responsibility for public and private workforce preparation programs, in order to ensure coordination and alignment of training production and workforce demand. Adult education programs would also be customized throughout the state by augmentation of services in the previously mentioned priority areas with other courses and training needed by adults in local communities to become self sufficient and productive members of society.

Beyond their traditional goal of providing broad access to postsecondary education, state officials would also be clearly focused on ensuring the success of those students who chose to

enroll. To further this end, the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California systems would be required to annually submit all data required by the National Center for Educational Statistics and a limited set of additional data on desired student outcomes and characteristics, personnel characteristics, expenditures, and compliance with state standards. All required data would be reported by unique student identifier, to enable longitudinal monitoring of student outcomes and would be consistently submitted to the State's intersegmental education commission. Independent and private colleges and universities would be requested to submit similar data and, for certain key data on student outcomes, we would condition continued eligibility to participate in the State's financial aid program on compliance with this request.

We would take steps to better ensure quality in the educational offerings of private, for-profit institutions offering degrees, by transferring oversight and program approval to the State's postsecondary education commission. We believe this step would be necessary to ensure that students who chose to enroll in these institutions received an education of a quality equivalent to that of public and not-for-profit, accredited independent institutions and to facilitate transitions, with minimal or no loss of credits, between and among all postsecondary education institutions approved to operate in the state. This accomplishment would not only provide greater equity in expectations for quality but would contribute to a more efficient postsecondary education enterprise by relieving some of the demand for enrollment in public institutions. The State's intersegmental education commission would monitor data on student outcomes in each type of institution and advise the Legislature and Governor of any trends indicating a need for increased scrutiny and of practices associated with high performance that might warrant replication.

We would anticipate the educational needs of Californians in the future by charging the State's education commissions to regularly engage in long-term planning, using comprehensive educational and demographic data as a basis for that planning. The education commission would also collaborate with the Department of Finance's Demographic Research Unit to incorporate the unit's forecasts of California population trends and progression through public schools, and with the Governor's chief state education officer to evaluate the effectiveness of state policy intended to improve education outcomes and coordination.

Affordability

In absolute dollars, California now invests more money in its public education system than any other state in the nation, by a considerable margin; but we also enroll considerably more students than any other state. We envision a system, however, in which we will be far less concerned about how California's investment compares to that of other states than we will about how well we are providing the resources we believe are necessary to make possible the education system we desire. Our annual appropriations for each level of education would be determined by our best estimates of what it costs to provide the educational resources that make a difference in promoting student achievement. We would fully expect all public schools, colleges, and universities to be efficient in their operations and use of public funds; but we would also realize that quality education is expensive. We would not expect public education to sacrifice effectiveness simply to achieve greater economy.

We would commit ourselves to providing adequate compensation, benefits, and working conditions that would position California to attract and retain education personnel with professional qualifications and attitudes that would match our vision of public education at all levels. We would modify our compensation schedules and reward systems to provide opportunities for increased compensation without requiring excellent teachers to leave the classroom or disproportionately devote their time to research unrelated to excellence in teaching and learning. We would earmark a modest proportion of state-funded research to advance our knowledge of what works in promoting learning and achievement among diverse student groups, in recognition of the fact that the greater public benefit derives from Californians who develop a disposition for learning and acquire from their educational experiences the tools of learning that enable them to continue to learn over a lifetime.

Our goals-based approach to financing public education would enable us to strike a better balance between state and local control over the use of education resources. The State would focus clearly on the academic achievement goals it wanted for all students and the resources necessary to achieve those goals, but would clearly understand that there is no single ‘best way’ to achieve those goals. We would therefore dramatically reduce state reliance on categorical allocation of funds. Rather, we would ensure that all education institutions had the base of funding determined to be adequate to achieve the goals established for them, and allow them to locally determine how best to use those funds to achieve the learner outcomes we expect. We would establish state standards for physical facilities, to ensure appropriate conditions for teaching and learning, and for teaching and administrative qualifications, to ensure all students are taught by qualified teachers. All education institutions would be run by educational leaders who understand how to maintain school cultures that are supportive of teaching and learning, knew how to evaluate achievement data, and emphasize continuous improvement. These educational leaders would also publicly report educational progress within their institutions to enable regular review and evaluation of both student achievement and institutional performance. The resources needed to gather and report appropriate data would be considered essential components of quality and would be built into the adequate base of funding.

All public schools, colleges, and universities would maintain an array of supplemental learning support designed to assist students in meeting the learning expectations we had for them at each level of public education. This support would include learning centers, academic tutoring, and supplemental instruction; it would also include use of technology to facilitate independent replication of problem solving, retrieval of lecture and/or lab notes after hours, accommodation of diagnosed disabilities, and embedded assessments to assist students in accelerating their learning. Professional staff would be available to assist students in grounding their learning in real-world contexts through service learning experiences, career exploration, internships, apprenticeships, and career and academic planning. These contextual learning opportunities, too, would be considered essential components and would be built into our base of adequate funding.

We would systematically upgrade and expand public education facilities through a combination of direct General Fund appropriations and issuance of General Obligation bonds. We would focus first on upgrading schools and colleges with the oldest facilities and with the facilities in the worst state of repair. Not only would this focus be both logical, and equitable to students and communities, it would contribute to satisfaction of our commitment to ensure that qualified

teachers were available to teach students in every public school classroom, by ensuring they had modern, well-maintained campuses in which to teach. We would follow the advice of economists by using bonds to amortize the costs of facility construction and modernization, spreading their repayment across future generations whose children would derive the greatest benefits from the facilities. We would be mindful, however, that some of those future costs could be mitigated through direct appropriation of General Fund monies for facility needs when state revenues permitted, thereby avoiding financing costs to the State and on-going expenditures that would be more difficult to reduce during poor fiscal times.

We would reaffirm our state's long-standing commitment to providing Californians affordable access to public colleges and universities. We would adhere to the belief that students have an obligation to assume responsibility for paying a fair share of the costs of attending college. That share, after possible readjustment, would include health care, laboratory fees, intercollegiate athletics, and student services. Additional costs could be incurred by students who chose to reside on campus or park personal cars on campus. Any suggested increase in student fees would be based on increases in these costs and would be limited by changes in per capita family income. The State would assume responsibility for meeting increases in operational costs related to instruction and state-supported research. Changes in housing and parking costs would be annually communicated to students in writing and would be considered legitimate costs of attendance for which needy students could receive financial assistance, as would other costs used to determine mandatory student fees. During times of poor economic conditions, state policymakers would negotiate with the governing boards of each public system to limit any increases in student fees and to balance trade-offs between enrollment growth, compensation increases, and investment in other quality education components.

We would be obligated to be prudent in the use of public funds, even for as important a state investment as public education. We would seek to carry out this responsibility in several ways. First, we would actively encourage schools, colleges, and universities to build and maintain linkages with businesses throughout the state. Business would be not only a consumer of education products but a provider itself. The State would provide certain incentives to businesses to engage in such partnerships with education institutions.

Second, we would seek to take greater advantage of the impressive array of private and independent schools, colleges, and universities within California. At the postsecondary level, we would continue a long-standing commitment to providing financial assistance to Californians who choose to enroll in independent institutions rather than public colleges or universities. We would incorporate private, proprietary colleges and universities into our education system to ensure that students who choose to enroll in such institutions would have access to comparable quality in educational programs, enrollment in which, in turn, would qualify them for need-based financial assistance from state and federal sources.

Finally, we would reaffirm our belief that differentiation of function is more efficient than redundancy in function among California's education providers, particularly at the postsecondary education level. Our mechanism for coordination would reflect this belief.

Our vision of California's education system would be expensive but efficient. We would steadily improve our understanding of the relationship between component costs and the goals we adopted for public education. A portion of the research capacity of this state would be continuously focused on this relationship to guide state policymakers in making difficult funding decisions when the State entered poor fiscal circumstances. Our clarity of vision and understanding of the relationship between education goals and their costs would also guide reinvestment decisions when economic times improved, so that we would reinvest in things that matter most rather than simply attempting to restore cuts or unrealized gains of the past.

Conclusion

This Plan is ambitious in its scope and its full implementation will require a sustained commitment on the part of all Californians and substantial investment from the State, local communities, and business. This Plan cannot be implemented without the engagement of our entire state and all of its component parts. Parents, students, educators, policymakers, community-based organizations, and employers each and all have a responsibility to support quality teaching and learning and must both accept and fulfill their respective responsibilities for implementation of this Plan. No other state has undertaken what is being proposed in this Master Plan for Education: creation of a framework to guide educational policy for all aspects of education, from early childhood education to postsecondary education levels, driven by an uncompromised commitment to promoting student achievement and the ability to learn for a lifetime. We believe that virtually every student can and should be assisted in realizing her/his potential to become a learner for life, and in meeting (or even exceeding) high standards of achievement. An education system that remains focused on helping learners achieve this potential must also be focused on continual improvement.

Because learning takes place within the context of learners' lives, the needs to which our education system must respond will inevitably change over time. Today's instruction is not limited to use of slates and chalkboards, as it was in the past; and it is appropriate to conclude that instruction will not be limited to printed textbooks and face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners in the future. The changes generated by science, technology, and use of information are increasingly generating new opportunities and new tools for workers, learners, teachers, and researchers alike. At the same time, the increasingly diverse population in California is creating opportunities for new community linkages and opening new paths for students to become engaged citizens. The committee recognizes this fact and recommends that this Master Plan for Education be reviewed comprehensively at least every 10 years and modified, as necessary, to ensure a continued focus on learners within California's education system. While this Master Plan should undergo a comprehensive review at least every 10 years, the Joint Committee further believes that an interim review should occur every three to five years during the initial years of implementation. Among the issues that rapid change suggests may warrant attention during interim reviews are the following:

- The potential impact of distance and electronically-mediated learning on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, as well as on the variety of learning options from which Californians could choose to pursue their interests in acquiring new knowledge and new skills;

- The variety of formats in which textbooks and other instructional materials could be available and the possibilities that these formats could offer for assuring that every learner enrolled in a public education institution has access to current information and learning support;
- The findings of research on effective ways to create and sustain small learning communities that may suggest new ways to structure and finance public schools; and
- New information learned about ways to effectively cultivate educational leadership and collaborative governance arrangements that could improve the effectiveness and seamlessness of California's education system.

This call for interim reviews is also driven by the focus of this Plan on student achievement and its commitment to both equity and accountability in providing high quality educational experiences for every student enrolled in California schools, colleges, and universities. With all Californians supporting these basic principles, we will be able to provide more educational access, quality, and success to more students than ever before – a goal that is uniquely Californian and to which we can all aspire. The balance of this Master Plan provides greater detail on this and other educational goals can be achieved.